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S E C R E T RABAT 000165

NOFORN

STATE FOR AF/W AND NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MO](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: MOROCCO ASSISTS MAURITANIAN APPEAL FOR INCREASED
DIALOGUE WITH THE U.S.

Classified By: Charge Robert P.Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S/NF) Summary: A senior Moroccan diplomat asked us to convey a message to the USG from the Mauritanian High Council of State (HCE or junta), requesting that the U.S. consider normalizing its relations with the HCE. In mid-February, the military government's Foreign Minister Ould Mohamedou met King Mohammed VI and subsequently used a Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs contact to convey this message to Embassy Rabat. Mohamedou said that he would follow-up by sending a detailed request in writing to the Embassy, through the Moroccan MFA. Our contact cautioned that the Foreign Minister and the Ministry were not aware of this request, but implied it represented the GOM's wishes, at the highest level, that the junta's request for normalization of relations be conveyed to the USG. End summary.

Mauritanian High Council Appeals
to Morocco for Help with U.S.

12. (S/NF) On February 13, 2009, Abdellatif Bendahane (strictly protect), Director of African Affairs at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MFA), who has often been a conduit for sensitive information, summoned Deputy PolCouns. Bendahane reported that Mauritanian junta Foreign Minister Dr. Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou had secretly visited Morocco between February 9 and 13 and had met with Morocco's King Mohammed VI twice. Subsequent to his meetings with the King, Mohamedou met with our contact. Our contact described his relationship with Mohamedou as close, "like brothers," adding that his mother and Mohamedou's mother had tribal/blood relations. (Comment: While it is normal to exaggerate the closeness of family connections here, such links, however distant, often count for something in the Moroccan political context. End comment.) Bendahane said that Mohamedou had asked him, on behalf of the HCE, to contact the U.S. Embassy in an effort to "appeal to the U.S. to realign its position with Mauritania."

HCE Appeals for Normalization of Relations

13. (S/NF) Bendahane said Mohamedou had told him that the Mauritanian junta would like to normalize its relations with the U.S. and, at a minimum, needed U.S. counterterrorism assistance. He bemoaned the junta's situation and asked that the USG provide a list of conditions that would be required

to normalize relations. Mohemdou had relayed that the French MFA, in recent months, had given the junta a list of ten of its own conditions, which the Abdel Aziz regime was now in the process of fulfilling in exchange for renewed assistance. Mohemdou, in defending the junta, had underscored that the military authorities had not killed anyone during or after the August 2008 coup, had freed ousted President Abdellahi from detention, was currently following the Constitution, and was planning presidential elections. Mohemdou undertook to provide a further communication, which has not yet been received.

Morocco Facilitates Unconventional Channel

¶4. (S/NF) In closing the meeting, Bendhane underscored to Deputy PolCouns that knowledge of this meeting and the communication should stay between himself, the U.S. Embassy, and Direction Generale des Etudes et de la Documentation (DGED) Director General Mohammed Yassine Mansouri, adding: "My Minister (i.e., Minister of Foreign Affairs Taieb Fassi Fihri) does not know about this communication."

¶5. (S/NF) Comment: Our contact has for years credibly conveyed high-level and sensitive information beyond what we hear from the Foreign Minister or his Ministry. He is known for his close relations with DGED Chief Mansouri, who has the lead on Mauritania in the GOM. While the possibility exists that this is not an official message, we have no reason to question that this is an effort by the Mauritanian junta to reach out. We defer to the Department and Embassy Nouakchott on the substance and are simply reporting this message as received. End comment.

¶6. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/rabat>

Jackson